

**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF RIVERSIDE**  
***CITY PLANNING COMMISSION***  
1,879th Meeting



6:00 p.m. March 31, 2005  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL  
3900 MAIN STREET

**MINUTES APPROVED AS SUBMITTED  
AT THE MAY 19, 2005 MEETING**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Agnew, Brown, Comer, Densmore, Leonard, Norton, Singletary

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Kurani, Stephens

STAFF PRESENT: Gutierrez, Planning Director  
Aaron, Principal Planner  
Jenkins, Senior Planner  
Milosevic, Associate Planner  
Brenes, Associate Planner  
Smith, Deputy City Attorney  
Andrade, Stenographer

**THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS WAS CONDUCTED:**

Chair Leonard called the meeting to order.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given to the Flag.

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K. **PUBLIC HEARING - 6:00 pm**

- 1 **PLANNING CASE P04-0178:** Planning Commission review of the General Plan 2025 Program and related Final Program Environmental Impact Report (SCH NO. 2004021108). The General Plan 2025 Program consists of the following components: 1) the City of Riverside General Plan 2025; 2) the comprehensive revision of the City of Riverside Zoning Code (Title 19 of the Municipal Code) and the rezoning of properties to reflect new zone names; 3) the comprehensive revision of the City of Riverside Subdivision Code (Title 18 of the Municipal Code); 4) the Citywide Design Guidelines; and 5) the Implementation Plan.

Ken Gutierrez, Planning Director, thanked everyone for attending the meeting tonight. He also thanked the Planning Commissioners for giving up their evening tonight as volunteers to the City. He introduced Laura Stetson, lead consultant for the General Plan 2025 update.

Chair Leonard stated that he was asked to elaborate on Mr. Gutierrez's comments. The Commission is here to listen, they are citizens of Riverside who own businesses and live in Riverside. The Commission will be making recommendations to the City Council based on the evidence, representations, views and concerns of the citizens. The Commission will need the audience's help in providing testimony in a constructive and orderly manner. He wanted to assure them that all of the concerns will be addressed as there will be numerous meetings on a multitude of topics.

Laura Stetson, consultant, presented the Circulation and Community Mobility Element. This element looks at all ways the people have of getting around Riverside. To a large degree the proposal does not make any changes from the plan that is currently on the books. She highlighted a couple of key issues addressed in the Circulation and Mobility Element. She introduced Gary Hamrick who assisted them in putting the Element together.

Commissioner Densmore commented that there was an article in the Press Enterprise recently regarding the widening of Alessandro. How does what is currently being decided by Council affect what is being recommended by the General Plan?

Ms. Stetson explained that the Council's actions are consistent with what is on the Master Plan today. The Circulation Master Plan before the Commission this evening continues with what the Council is moving forward with and is not inconsistent.

Commissioner Densmore said he is on the panel for Go Riverside which has identified Magnolia Avenue as a key inter-city roadway. He asked whether the consultant's use of the term "downgrade" meant that Magnolia would not have the importance that it has been given in the past and looked for in the future.

Ms. Stetson replied that by preserving the full width right-of-way that exists today, it creates a lot of flexibility to do other things within the right-of-way. Perhaps a better word to describe this is to "redesignate" Magnolia Avenue and how it might function in the future.

Commissioner Densmore noted that the General Plan encourages the building of additional pathways and alternate transportation. He asked if these were preferences or priorities and how these priorities would be translated by the City Council into action? How will these goals be anything other than goals?

Ms. Stetson indicated that this would affect all of the goals and policies in the General Plan. These are all the City's desire for what it would like to see in the future. How these will be prioritized is up to the City Council. The important point to remember is that by designating the pathways, or additional things, it puts developers on

notice that if they are going to build along a certain stretch that the right-of-way needs to be preserved for these pathways or parkways.

Commissioner Densmore also asked if the widening of Alessandro, for example will impact the residents on both side of the street. How will the residents be notified and/or compensated if any sort of taking of their property is involved?

Mr. Gutierrez stated that there is a public review process. It was his understanding that there will be no land taken for the widening, the striping will be done within the existing right-of-way.

Fran Dunajski, stated that this was correct and that the widening would take place within the existing median.

Commissioner Brown wanted to add to Ms. Stetson's comments with regard to the Central and Overlook extensions. He was part of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Washington/Alessandro Community put together by Councilman Schiavone and Supervisor Buster. There were lengthy discussions at both these committees. He felt that the Central connection was important and needed to be included in the Plan. If the Council elects to turn it down, the burden will be on them. They also spent a lot of time on the Overlook connection but the conclusion was that additional time and money was required to study this connection. The CAC also discussed the need for bridle paths.

Commissioner Norton commented that they have talked about the Magnolia Corridor and the "L" up University. She asked if any of the guidelines placed on Magnolia Avenue would apply to University Avenue with regard to transportation.

Ms. Stetson responded that in terms of the precise treatment of University Avenue, no because it has a different classification but yes in terms of whether it would be able to support similar improvements.

Commissioner Norton inquired if there was anything more specific regarding the recommendations for the Cajalco Expressway.

Ms. Stetson said that the policy was fairly general. In terms of what the current planning of that roadway is, she deferred to the Traffic Engineer.

Mr. Dunajski informed the Commission that there is really nothing definitive at this point and that it was still in the planning stages.

Mr. Gutierrez clarified a little on the purpose of the General Plan which is really is a policy document. A policy document is no good without an Implementation Plan as many of Commissioners have alluded to. There is an Implementation Plan for the General Plan which will be part of a subsequent hearing. The Implementation Plan is the action steps to implement the policies in this Plan. Another way to implement the policies is through the City's Capital Improvement Plan. The Capital Improvement Plan needs to be consistent with the General Plan because these are the mechanisms to implement the policies in this document

Commissioner Agnew noted that Walkability Task Force has just completed its report and will ultimately be adopted by Council. In reviewing the walking and biking portion of the General Plan, some of the very basic policies are included there. There are a tremendous amount of others in the Walkability Plan and asked whether those could be incorporated into the Circulation and Community Mobility Element?

Mr. Gutierrez agreed. One of the steps of the Implementation Plan is to incorporate a number of studies including the Walkability Task Force's Plan and their policies. It also calls for annual reviews of the General Plan so that there is plenty of opportunity each year to look at these documents as they come forward or any new policies that grow out of task force committees.

Chair Leonard said that the discussions were focused in very broad policy statements. He asked the consultant to go over where the difficult spots were and the areas that could become traffic failures if mitigations aren't required.

Commissioner Densmore requested that if during the consultant's overview of the traffic they discussed the intersections in terms of A, B, or C that they explain what those mean.

Gary Hamrick explained that one of the things they did was to look at some of the key intersections in the City today in terms of how they operate. He explained the levels of service and what they meant. He showed exhibits of the City indicating the various levels of service at major streets and intersections.

Ms. Stetson began the presentation on the Housing Element. She explained that this Element is updated every 5 years. There are no real changes in policies, just an update to ensure it corresponds with State requirements. She also presented the Arts & Culture Element, which she explained was an optional Element. Riverside felt it was very important to include this Element.

She presented the Education Element. This Element is also not required by State Law but the City Council recognized that education is a cornerstone to the community and needs to be in the Plan.

She continued her presentation with the Public Safety Element.

Chair Leonard said that the next Elements were Air Quality and Noise and that if anyone would like to speak on those matters that would be fine but asked Ms. Stetson if she could skip to the Open Space and Conservation Element.

Ms. Stetson gave an overview of the Open Space and Conservation Element which recognizes the scenic resources and the value they provide in terms of habitat and places for recreation. The Element also addresses the conservation aspect. Recognizing the Santa Ana River as a tremendous resource in the community for open space, ground water recharge and a number of things.

Commissioner Densmore commented on the Noise Element. He sees issues in the Press Enterprise time and time again regarding the railroads. What can the City do, if anything, to work with the railroad or regulate the railroad? Secondly, question regarding the noise current and anticipated with March Air Reserve Base and Cargo Port. It says insure viability in the noise element but he wasn't sure what that meant?

Ms. Stetson replied that with regard to train traffic there are a number of policies that do not just say encourage and work with but really start to address efforts. The City has already worked toward trying to get grade separations at critical locations wherever possible. If there is a grade separation, there is no need to blow the whistle because it isn't a street crossing which helps with gridlock as well as noise issues. With regard to March Air Reserve Base (MARB), the City is part of a Joint Powers Authority that works with the use at MARB. The noise contours shown in the Noise Element currently reflect anticipated operations of the MARB. Those contours may change as part of the current study underway to reflect longer range plans for the Inland Cargo Port.

Mr. Gutierrez added that the City has worked with the Airport Land Use Committee (ALUC) on a Land Use Compatibility Plan for the Riverside Municipal Airport that has been approved and will be folded into the General Plan. The March Joint Powers Authority is also working on Land Use Compatibility Plan for the area around MARB. Staff expects to implement Overlay Zones for both the areas around the Riverside Municipal Airport as well as March Cargo Port so that not only are people protected from noise levels but also safety issues. The goal is to protect the citizens but also the long term viability of the Base and Airport.

Gary Hamrick informed the Commission that the County recently published their Legislative Agenda. One of the items on the agenda is related to the movement of port and cargo issues out of the Inland Empire. The Legislative Agenda has things like; insure that all movement of inland ports doesn't shift the impacts of where it is at now to the County or City, make sure it is mitigated when it comes out here, and also to seek State and Federal funding for things like grade separations and mitigation of truck traffic. The County is recognizing the issue for the first time in their Legislative Agenda.

Commissioner Comer asked if the noise contour maps would be corrected because they were not right. He noted that southerly from the railroad tracks the noise rises so that the noise is louder. Northerly of the tracks the noise goes from higher to lower ground. To have the noise contours the same on each side is not right, particularly through the arroyos. These should be corrected to demonstrate that a lot more residents are affected and could probably affect the ability to obtain federal funds.

Ms. Stetson said that the maps in the Element reflect measurements taken out in the field in 2003. They would be happy to look at the maps again but felt confident that they were correct. The noise contours are an average over a 24 hour period, not the peak noise or the conditions described by Commissioner Comer.

Commissioner Comer said that what he was describing is being shaken out of bed at 3 am 2 ½ miles away from the railroad tracks. He agreed that if the noise was averaged out over 24 hours it appears to be very little impact. This document needs to be much more critical about the amount of rail impact in the Community to use it to correct the situation.

Ms. Stetson said that his description was a point source problem rather than the 24 hour condition the maps are describing. Certainly, if it is the Commission's desire to discuss how the people are affected by the train noise, as a point source, one time event it could be done.

Commissioner Comer replied affirmatively.

Chair Leonard opened the hearing for public testimony with regard to the Elements reviewed tonight. It was the Commission's consensus to increase the time from two minutes to three.

David Kessinger addressed the Commission regarding the Circulation and Community Mobility Element.

Robert Elliot, 1319 Parkside Dr., stated that he was a member of the Citizen's Advisory Committee. What he heard tonight was somewhat upsetting to him. He was offended that the City Council would take the time or find the need to remove the Central Avenue completion.

R.A. Barnett, Highgrove resident, addressed the Commission. He said a lot of people were concerned about the traffic situation. He suggested utilizing the vacant land at the City limits for a metro link stop. He encouraged the City to work with RCTC and discuss this particular location that could be used as a metro link stop. He has also spoken with RCTC about this property. He has invited Mr. Gutierrez to attend the CSA 126 meeting in

Highgrove on April 26, at 7:00 pm at 459 Center Street. He said the Commissioners were also welcome to attend the meeting.

Commissioner Densmore stated that for him to put any value on the testimony, he would need to know the location of the property Mr. Barnett was referring to.

Mr. Barnett said that the property was between the existing San Jacinto Branch, owned by RCTC and the BNSF main line between San Bernardino and Riverside. It is approximately 19.25 acres of bare land that is fairly level. It is also part of Highgrove.

Mr. Gutierrez added that the property is in the Hunter Park area of the City. He has had discussions with RCTC and they are aware of this site and exploring that very thing.

Betty Lock, owns Elegant Aspects Salon at 3744 Sunnyside Drive, expressed her concern regarding a couple of issues. She said the train situation at Magnolia and Central Avenues was a mess. She is also a walker and thought it would be a good idea to include trash cans, an occasional bench and drinking fountains along the way. She asked if it was possible for the Orange Blossom Trolley to be used to promote shopping in Riverside by taking people to the Riverside Plaza, Canyon Crest Shopping Center, Galleria and even the Brockton Arcade. She also asked whether the Lions Head Park at Challen and California could be improved for people who walk, to include trails and trash cans?

Teresa Burkett, 841 Newburg in Orangecrest, said she spoke before the Commission in opposition of the Grove Community Church. There was some mitigation approved regarding traffic issues. She saw that the proposed plan included a two lane road for Grove Community Drive. She was told by Mr. Boyd that it was wide enough for four lanes. She asked if the street would be restriped to four lanes it were required when the Church became operational. She believed the Church would require more than just one lane on Sundays.

Mr. Dunajski informed the Commission that the plan now is to do exactly what Ms. Burkett said. A center left turn lane between the two lanes and if it becomes a problem later on, certainly they would install four lanes.

Ms. Burkett said she was also told that Barton Road is also part of the General Plan from Grove Community Church to Alessandro. She recalled that the Washington / Alessandro Committee also wanted this to go through but she did not see it on the map. She was also informed, with regard to the widening of Alessandro, that a light would be installed on Cannon. She was concerned that with the restriping there would not be a right turn lane.

Chair Leonard stated that the reason it was not on the map is that it is a local street. He said that it was a policy that this street make that extension.

Mr. Dunajski said that this was certainly under consideration as part of the project. It was under consideration to close the median or construct a traffic signal but their most recent discussions have been about a traffic signal.

Yolanda Garland, resident of La Sierra, addressed the Commission. She felt that the administration was being manipulated by developers. The City's roads cannot handle the traffic now and yet future plans are to add more traffic to already impacted roads. She hopes that corrections will be made to some of the traffic circulation mistakes which have adversely impacted many residential neighborhoods, especially rural areas. She appreciated the fact that the Commission was comprised of volunteers. She urged the audience to log onto [www.alkriverside.com](http://www.alkriverside.com).



Cecil Green, property owner on Elizabeth Street., stated that the City of Riverside should receive the letter F for service. The proposals would increase the traffic and smog problems in the City of Riverside.

Gerald Smith, Orangecrest resident, expressed his concern regarding the southeast area of Riverside. There has been a lot of planning going on but no action to eliminate the internal congestion in this area. According to the Circulation Plan 30 homes will face onto a 88' arterial road, Krameria Avenue. This particular stretch runs less than a mile and in addition to the current 30 homes, there are an additional 35 homes being planned. The Alta Cresta Development that is now being developed has its own circulation which is not outlined in the General Plan. It would have been nice to include this and see the entire circulation. As it stands, it is unknown whether the Alta Cresta project will enhance or impede progress.

Chair Leonard noted that he sees other 88' streets in Riverside with homes facing it. These homes may have started on local streets that grew that way. He stated that Mr. Smith's point was taken and that is something the Commission will have to evaluate. He also understood that Krameria extended into March Air Reserve Base and Business Park.

Mr. Smith said that it actually dead ends at the March JPA property on the other side of Barton Road. His issue was that there is a mile stretch that goes nowhere on either end and yet it is a proposed 88' arterial.

Mary Humbolt, 7407 Dufferin Avenue, suggested that the issue of school transportation be added to the Circulation and Community Mobility Element. The traffic around schools is tremendous during the pick up and drop off time. She would like to see a sliding scale of no more homes built until the traffic problems are solved.

Commissioner Densmore stated that this was an excellent point. The Go Riverside Task Force was looking at things that would help get people out of their cars. This would be a difficult transition but there are policies the City can address that would make it difficult to drive a car to certain areas. It should certainly be addressed, whether the Park or Circulation Elements is yet to be decided.

Mr. Gutierrez agreed that Ms. Humbolt made an excellent point but the issue is addressed. He quoted a section from the Education Element that reinforced Ms. Humbolt's comments. There are at least 4 - 5 Policies that directly relate to this very issue.

Chair Leonard referred to Ms. Lock's comments and asked if the Implementation Plan considered the use of trolleys at selected schools to see if there was sufficient ridership. Something internally within the City on a pilot basis without the bureaucracy of having to go through RTA.

Mr. Gutierrez replied that the trolleys run through RTA.

Doug Barrow, stated he owned a number of properties around the intersection of Central and School Circle Drive. Earlier in the presentation he heard that a course of action will be to downgrade Magnolia Avenue which is right by his properties. He expressed his concern that there is, as everyone knows, a major traffic problem where Magnolia, Central and Brockton all intersect. Over the year he has heard different possible solutions proposed, at one time there was talk about an overhead pedestrian walkway that would bridge one of those streets or several of them. Over the years people are becoming more and more walkers and this is one of the heaviest areas of traffic in Riverside. He would like to know, with this mention of downgrade, if there are any plans to do something at that big intersection.

Mr. Gutierrez clarified that what is called a downgrade in Magnolia Avenue is a misnomer, there will not be any changes to the carrying capacity of Magnolia Avenue. There is no downgrading in terms of ability to move traffic.



Magnolia has some right of way that isn't being used but it will always be as it is. With regard to the intersection he deferred to the Mr. Dunajski.

Mr. Dunajski stated that as part of the Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan that intersection is being looked at. Those issues will be addressed in the Specific Plan.

Mr. Gutierrez added that the Specific Plan is a focused study of the Magnolia Avenue corridor from Downtown through to the western end of the City. The Specific Plan will take closer look at land uses and circulation, and bus rapid transit and how they integrate. The intent is to return Magnolia Avenue to its original grandeur.

Mr. Barrow asked if there should be some focus or thrust to address the problem of having people who are walking get across those streets go the plaza and go shopping. This is what everyone seems to lose track of that. We have to do something about it.

Mr. Gutierrez agreed and said he was a strong advocate for walkways and giving pedestrians priority.

Chair Leonard noted that the question of Krameria Avenue has now come up at two different hearings. He wondered if staff could provide a justification for the 88' right of way. One of those streets does extend into the March Business Park. That would seem to be the justification but he did not recall that for sure.

Mr. Gutierrez agreed. He informed the Commission that staff is having conversations regularly with the County of Riverside, most of the property is in the County. Staff has an understanding of how the traffic works in the area but not part of the General Plan because these are local streets, they are not the major arterials that are outlined here.

*The Commission took a 5 minute break.*

Chair Leonard asked Ms. Stetson to continue with the presentation of the Open Space and Park and Recreation Element since there was time available.

Ms. Stetson said she had quickly gone through the Open Space and Conservation Element earlier and would proceed with the next Element, Air Quality. The Air Quality Element is an optional Element that the Mayor felt was very important in order to recognize the strides Riverside has made as part of the region to improve air quality in the last 20 years.

Chair Leonard pointed out that page AQ-26, Policy 4-6 regarding the idling of trains within the City's boundaries. He asked if there was a way to put teeth to that could be established through the Implementation Plan. The policy plants seeds to create a method to address this, which is laudable.

Ms. Stetson replied that this is something that needs to be addressed in more detail through the Implementation Plan. Mr. Gutierrez has indicated that this is an extraordinarily difficult issue but the City is very much resolved to dealing with the issue.

Commissioner Densmore stated that the bottom line was that the City has no jurisdiction over either school or railroad issues unless the law changes. We can have goals and combine with others for effective lobbying efforts but on its own, there isn't anything that can be done.

Mr. Gutierrez indicated that there are things the City can do through its Resolutions and Ordinances and other things that are relegated to an advocacy role.

Ms. Stetson continued with the Public Facilities and Infrastructure Element and the Parks and Recreation Element.

Chair Leonard commented that with regard to the Lions Head Park mentioned earlier, this site is not on the Park Plan.

Mr. Gutierrez clarified that Lion's Head is private property. The park on the plan is Challen Park near Food for Less.

Ms. Stetson stated that there were no changes to the currently adopted Preservation Element.

Mary Humbolt, 7407 Dufferin, spoke regarding the Park and Recreation Element. The Park Plan asks that the Gage Canal be used as a recreational trail, she stated she was opposed to this. The liability issues are pretty significant and an infringement to their ability to farm out there. She added that they keep their equipment on the Canal.

Commissioner Densmore asked if she would prefer that this be removed from the whole thing or a portion.

Ms. Humbolt replied that it should be removed from the areas where people are doing Commercial Agriculture.

Chair Leonard stated he did not see a reference that the Gage Canal was proposed as a part of the Park System.

Ms. Stetson said that this was developed as part of the Riverside Park concept and Recreation Plan that was put together.

Chair Leonard understand from individual case hearings that there has been a lot of interest in making an equestrian corridor through there which has not been entirely welcome in terms of mixing those two uses. Does this proposal stipulate as to the types of uses that would be allowed.

Ms. Stetson replied that it did not, just that it was a potential trail, undefined in terms of what type of trail.

Chair Leonard asked if there was a means to acknowledge sections of the Gage Canal as a Park Element for the purpose of protection but not necessarily for public access.

Mr. Gutierrez added that there is a proposal to make Victoria Avenue a City Park. The concept of the Gage Canal as a similar thing is difficult because once you make it a park, it is hard to restrict access.

Ms. Humbolt stated that she objected to this as long as there was the commitment to the history of Riverside and preserving the greenbelt as is, it is premature to include this.

L. **ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment to April 7, 2005 at 6:00 pm in the Art Pick Council Chambers.